

At the Del Monte annual session, on May 3, Dr. Junius B. Harris of Sacramento, Chairman of the California Medical Association's Committee on Public Policy and Legislation, will present a progress report.

NEW FEATURES IN COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

County Society Programs Should Be of Broad Scope.—The order of business at meetings of many County Medical Societies has varied but little with the passing years; the generally accepted plan being the reading and discussion of one or two didactic papers on medical topics with which, at times, are given some reports of cases and a brief consideration of business items. The tradition of constancy to this type of program has been so firmly instilled that, when attempts are made to introduce the consideration of important, modern-day problems having to do with medical economics, not infrequently the suggestions are received with silent or outspoken opposition.

Such conservatism and allegiance to former procedures, however, are not everywhere prevalent, and less so, perhaps, in the Far West than in the East. As throughout the Union some of the pressing economic and social welfare problems begin to make themselves felt in medical practice, there are indications of an increasing willingness to permit discussion of matters closely related to medicine's progress, even when these encroach only indirectly on scientific medicine. It is fortunate that an alteration of attitude has come about, because, in this changing, present-day world, with the emphasis that is being placed on regimentation, and on mass and stereotyped production, it is apparent that institutions, organizations and individuals who do not recognize these newer forces may find cause, later on, to regret their indifference or opposition. It is becoming increasingly evident that State and County Medical Societies, through perhaps their official publications, must call the attention of members, not once, but repeatedly, to problems directly or indirectly affecting medical practice, and concerning which it is important to have unity of opinion and collective action. Only through frank discussion and subsequent agreement on courses of action to be pursued, may we hope for successful outcomes in some of these matters which so threaten medical practice and the interests of physicians. In this connection, it is gratifying to note that medical schools also are awakening to their responsibilities to young men and women, by them in the past so often launched into professional practice, saturated presumably with medical knowledge and idealism, but with little or no comprehension as to just what they may be apt to meet in a practical world, or along what lines it would be wise for them to guide their courses if mistakes or blunders, that might prove handicaps for years, were to be avoided.

Fraternal Contacts and Understandings Should Be Encouraged.—Somewhat of the lack of acceptance of these nonscientific portions of medical practice has its basis in the inadequate attention which societies have given in the past to fraternal affiliations between members; it being forgotten or minimized that, through such social fellowship, come better, broader and kindlier understandings, ends much needed in a profession where individualism plays so vital a part in daily living and practice. For instance, that is why dinner meetings, preceding or following scientific and business sessions of County Medical Societies, can be made to have great value. It is encouraging to note the increasing number of medical organizations beginning to appreciate this. In the larger societies, especially, additional features may be brought forward to promote good fellowship, as well as the concord of purpose that comes from better personal understanding and friendship with colleagues whom one might otherwise know only by name, or in the most casual manner.

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Two Recent Novel Features Sponsored by the Los Angeles County Medical Association. Reference may be made, in this connection, to two recent activities which have created much interest in the Los Angeles County Medical Association. One was the Hobby Exhibit, described on page 134 of the February issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, in which more than forty members presented exhibits of their activities in nonmedical art and work, by displaying things they, themselves, had made or collected. It was the opinion of the many visitors to the "hobby show" that it rendered a most useful service, not only to the County Association and its members, but, through publicity given in the daily press, also to the community.

On page 286 of the current issue appears a story of an "Amateur Night" which was marked by the largest attendance yet recorded since the new headquarters of the Association have been used, the audience consisting of almost six hundred physicians, each of whom enjoyed the talent displayed by fellow members, and voted the evening's entertainment a great success. Mention may also be made of the Bridge Tournament, which was carried on during the noon hours throughout the year. An account of this, with a description of the President's Perpetual Bridge Trophy, is given on page 282 of this month's issue.

The officers of the Los Angeles County Medical Association, therefore, are of the opinion that these new forms of Society activity have been of aid in strengthening the Association, and they propose to continue efforts along such lines.

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Medical Societies Should Promote Scientific, Organization and Fraternal Activities.—There is as much need today as ever for support of all plans that make for the advancement of medical science, but it is an error to think that component county units in the United States—upon whom,

through collective action, falls much of the burden of maintaining, in their own territories and at large, the standards of scientific medicine—can be true to progress in medical science only by remaining aloof from relationships essentially human and fraternal.

As a matter of fact, in every County and State Medical Society, scientific, and also organization and fraternal, activities should be given proper places. There is a real demand for each, and a study of societies will reveal that those associations which give each of these elements their due recognition are accomplishing the best work for medicine, the public health, and for themselves.

"THROW AWAY" PUBLICATIONS

Minnesota Medicine Calls Attention to a Growing Evil.—A letter from the editor of *Minnesota Medicine*, on page 202 of the March, 1937, issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, called attention to the manner in which so-called "throw away" publications—sent out by the thousands for distribution to physicians throughout the Union—were abstracting, without permission, article after article which had previously appeared in State Society and technical journals. The Minnesota Committee on Publications stressed the importance of recognized medical magazines copyrighting their articles, in order to prevent these bold and unwarranted forays upon their contents. Several of these publications (with a no-subscription price, but distributed-free background) that have come into existence during the last several years, state in prominent type that more than 100,000 copies of their current issues had thus been placed in the mails.

The character of the advertising carried in most of these magazines is much like that which appeared, some twenty-five years or more ago, in a group of proprietary medical journals, the majority of which later went out of existence. As a consequence, for about two decades, the advertising pages in medical publications have been of comparatively decent standard, because of the nonexistence of periodicals which would accept advertising copy from the promoters of remedies whose formulae were not known or accepted by responsible investigators, such as the Council on Pharmacy of the American Medical Association.

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Character of Advertising in These Newer Publications.—Come now, and rather of a sudden, not one, but almost a dozen of this new type of journal, in which all kinds of advertising seem acceptable, and as a consequence of which the announcements of all kinds of nonapproved remedies are freely interspersed with the abstracts of articles, written by physicians of established reputation, whose original papers appeared in well-recognized medical journals. It is possible that the increasing number of such magazines may

ultimately make for their disappearance, on the natural supposition that firms which would present for consideration only drugs and remedies proven and acceptable to scientific and ethical medicine would no longer wish to be associated, page to page, with promoters of remedies not endorsed by the American Medical Association's Council on Pharmacy.

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"California and Western Medicine" Is Protected by Copyright.—The California Medical Association, through its Council in the year 1934, took out a copyright, and on a number of occasions the attention of several of these more recent periodicals has been called to their violation of that legal protection. Members, therefore, will confer a favor upon the central office of the California Medical Association if they will notify the Association Secretary whenever and wherever they detect such abstracting by irresponsible journals of articles previously and originally published by CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE. The California Medical Association gladly extends to state medical publications and others recognized in the specialties and of acceptable standard, the right to quote from and to make extracts of the contents of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL. Through its copyright protection, however, it again gives notice to all other periodicals, particularly to those of the "throw away" type, that the right to print any part of its contents, in abstracts and excerpts, is strictly forbidden.

EXCESSIVE FEES: THE HARM THEY DO TO SCIENTIFIC MEDICINE

What Newspaper Publicity Has Done.—Publicity in newspapers concerning suits over excessive fees has been a big factor in creating, among many estimable citizens, a prejudice against the medical profession; and one of the regrettable effects of such discussion by laymen can be noted in the support which is so militantly given by some civic organizations to various proposed legislation. Among such propositions are those which would open to nonindigent persons, on a part-pay basis, the doors of public institutions maintained for the indigent sick; the sponsoring of compulsory health insurance laws; and the support of voluntary health insurance measures, these last sometimes so loosely drawn that the medical protective feature (presumably of ample amount and types, as well as mandatory) is more a matter of assurance on paper than real security, and little less than a trespass upon the credulity of the unfortunate holders of policies.

In the late nineties and years immediately following, before the Carnegie-Flexner survey of medical colleges of the United States and prior to the surprising legal recognition of cultist groups by some of the States (of which California was one), comparatively little was seen in the daily press on the subject of excessive fees for medical and surgical services.